

**JOINT RECOMMENDATION  
FOR THE CANAMEX CORRIDOR  
THROUGH THE MARICOPA REGION**

**Maricopa Association of Governments  
Arizona Department of Transportation**

**Draft July 2000**

## **JOINT RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CANAMEX CORRIDOR THROUGH THE MARICOPA REGION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

While the CANAMEX Corridor has been defined in federal legislation as a national trade route extending from Canada to Mexico, the exact location of the route through Maricopa County has yet to be specified. To address this issue, a joint study by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) was undertaken. Eight alternative routes for the Corridor through the Maricopa region were studied. A 145-mile regional by-pass route, shown in Figure 1, is recommended for designation as the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region.

Starting from the junction of I-8 and I-10 and proceeding westward and northward, the recommended route includes: I-8, SR 85, I-10, the Sun Valley Parkway (extended north to US 60), US 60, the Wickenburg Bypass, and US 93. The exact alignments for the Sun Valley Parkway extension and the Wickenburg Bypass have not yet been determined.

Highlights of the recommended route include:

- A by-pass route in the Wickenburg area (two alternatives are shown),
- A northward extension of the Sun Valley Parkway to connect to US 60, and
- An upgrade of SR 85 between Gila Bend (junction with I-8) and Buckeye (junction with I-10) to four-lane freeway standards.

Figure 1 also shows alternative urban access routes that will continue to exist and be used for commercial and other traffic into and out of the region. The designation shown in Figure 1 of a specific route as the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region is not intended to preclude commercial or other traffic from using any other route within or around the urban area.

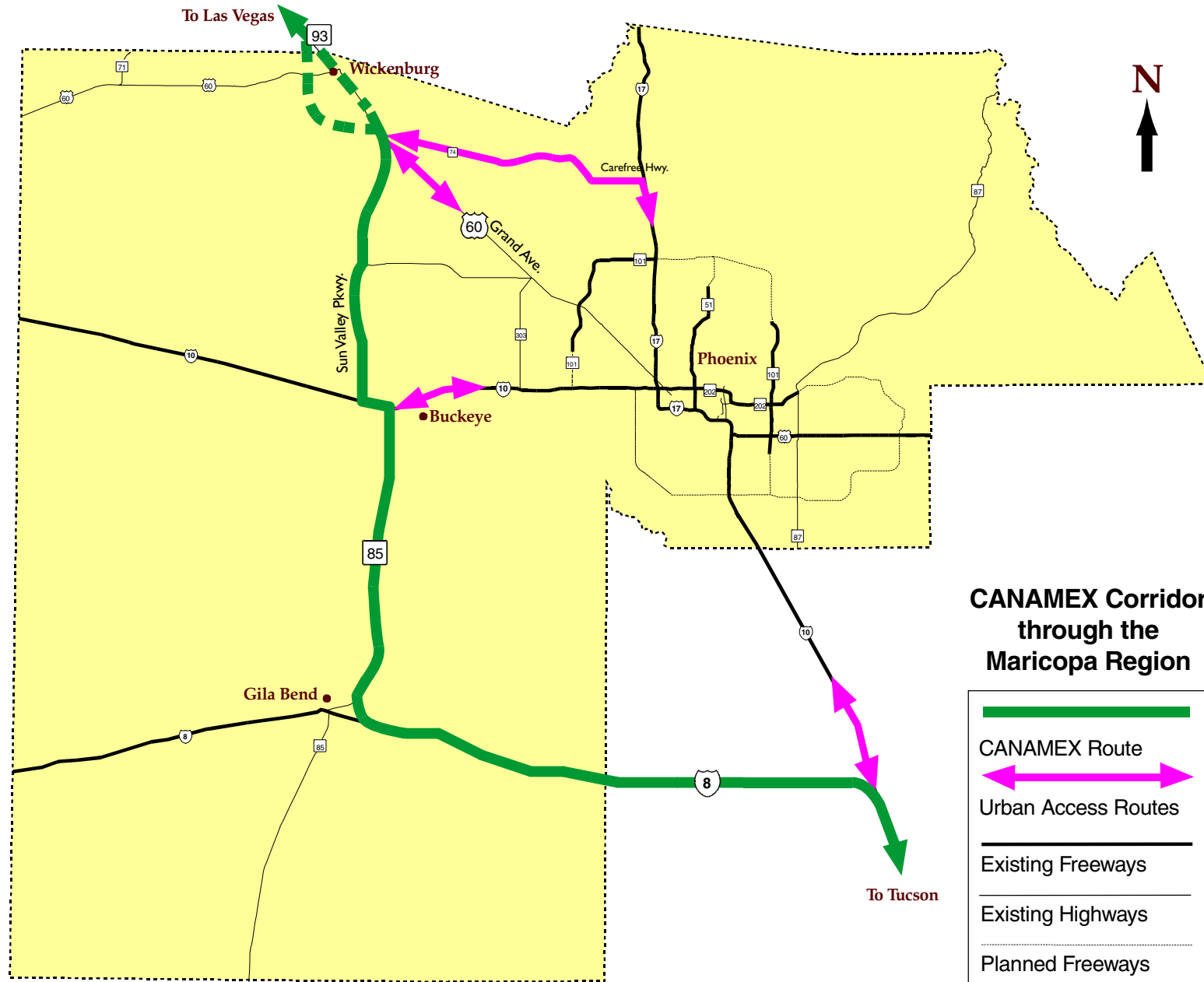


Figure 1: CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa Region

## **NATIONAL CORRIDOR**

The CANAMEX Corridor is one of forty-three national corridors identified in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the 1995 National Highway System (NHS) Designation Act, and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) as “high priority” corridors. Section 1105 of the NHS Designation Act specifies the CANAMEX Corridor to run from “Nogales, Arizona, through Las Vegas, Nevada, to Salt Lake City, Utah, to Idaho Falls, Idaho, to Montana, to the Canadian Border”.

In the State of Arizona, the CANAMEX Corridor has been designated to generally follow: “(i) I-19 from Nogales to Tucson; (ii) I-10 from Tucson to Phoenix; and (iii) United States Route 93 in the vicinity of Phoenix to the Nevada Border”. The route within the Maricopa region or Phoenix metropolitan area has not been defined in federal legislation to date.

## **MAG – ADOT JOINT STUDY PROCESS**

Due to strong interest expressed by many member agencies, MAG and ADOT initiated a corridor study in late 1999 to select a route for the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region. The final designation of the corridor needs joint approval of the MAG Regional Council and the State Transportation Board.

To initiate the project, drafts of an initial or master list of alternative routes, evaluation criteria, design guidelines and public involvement process were distributed for comment to local agencies and other major stakeholders. A Stakeholder Forum was held November 22, 1999 to receive comment on these materials. More detail on agency and public stakeholder input is provided in the next section.

Input received at the Forum was used to reduce the number of alternative alignments to be analyzed in this study from fifteen to eight. The short-listed alternatives are highlighted in Figure 2. They are comprised of combinations of three alternative routes in the southern portion of the region (I-8/SR85, I-10 with the Riggs Road Bypass, and I-10) with three in the northern portion (Loop 303, Sun Valley Parkway with an extension to US 60, and Wickenburg Road/Vulture Mine Road). The evaluation criteria established were cost, travel time, route length, level of service, access to freight terminals, constructability, safety, environmental impacts, Title VI and Environmental Justice impacts, and major community impacts.

The consulting firm Kimley-Horn and Associates Incorporated was retained to conduct research and collect field data to support the development of conceptual recommendations for needed infrastructure improvements and cost estimates for each of the short-listed alternative routes. The data compiled were organized for each of the routes according to the criteria established at the November 1999 Stakeholder Forum. The detailed results for each of the routes considered in the field review are contained in a separate report<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Kimley-Horn and Associates Inc., 2000, “Compilation of Evaluation Data for Designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa Region”, July. Copies may be obtained from ADOT or MAG.

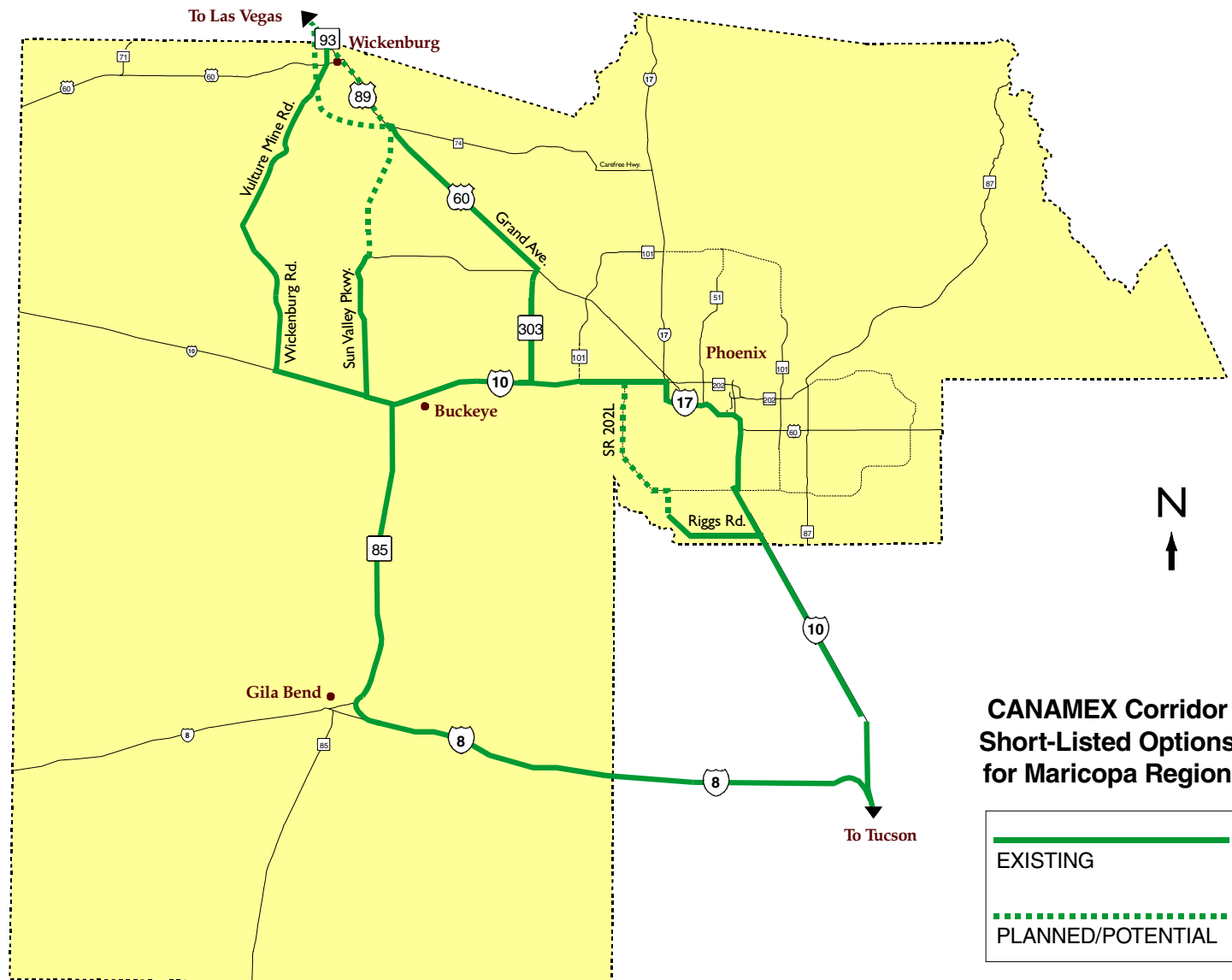


Figure 2: Master List of CANAMEX Corridor Options for Maricopa County

## **AGENCY AND PUBLIC STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

In addition to input received at the first Stakeholder Forum, agency stakeholder and public input was obtained at meetings where presentations on the project were made. Meetings included those of MAG Committees, the Governor's Vision 21 Transportation Task Force, the Citizens' Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC), and WESTMARC interested parties. Additional input was received from MAG member municipalities, who were surveyed for their perspective on potential impacts and benefits of the corridor to their jurisdictions. Their feedback, as noted below, was considered under "Major Community Impacts", which is one of the criteria applied to assess the alternative routes for this project<sup>2</sup>.

Significant comment has been received. Approximately two hundred letters and email have been received from the public and representatives of local governments. The majority of the correspondence has been from Sun City Grand and Surprise area residents that oppose consideration of Loop 303 as one segment of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region. The reasons cited were generally health, noise and safety relating to increased truck traffic.

Representatives of Sun City Grand, the City of Surprise and one member of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors sent letters opposing any consideration of Loop 303 for the Corridor. The City of Surprise supported an alignment involving the Sun Valley Parkway in place of Loop 303. Additionally, on March 9, 2000, the Council of the City of Surprise passed a resolution stating their opposition to the designation of Loop 303 as part of the CANAMEX route. The City of Goodyear however indicated support for the designation of Loop 303 in their "Regional Transportation Vision and Recommendations" document dated February 29, 2000.

The City Manager from the Town of Buckeye has opposed any alignment involving the Sun Valley Parkway, although the Mayor of Buckeye has indicated that he would not oppose the designation. The City Manager from the Town of Buckeye indicated support for a position that Loop 303 warranted study as a viable alternative "despite the letter-writing campaign from Sun City residents". Landowners/developers in the vicinity of the Sun Valley Parkway alternative have also written to oppose consideration of that facility for the CANAMEX Corridor. The Town of Wickenburg however supported alignments involving either the Sun Valley Parkway or Wickenburg Road, with either connecting to Vulture Mine Road.

The City of Phoenix voiced support for the alignments involving I-10 and I-17, and opposition to use of the South Mountain Parkway for the CANAMEX Corridor. The City of Glendale indicated their support for a bypass around the Town of Wickenburg as a necessary element of any alternative considered. They also reiterated their opposition, voiced at the November 1999 Stakeholder Forum, to consideration of Loop 101 and of Grand Avenue south of Loop 303, due to existing traffic congestion.

A Stakeholder Forum will be held on July 24, 2000 to review the draft report findings and staff recommendation. Additional public input opportunities will be scheduled following the Forum. After considering the input received, a final recommendation will be made for approval by the MAG Regional Council and the State Transportation Board. Copies of letters and email received to date are available for review upon request.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Kimley-Horn report previously noted for detail of the evaluations against the other criteria.

## **RECOMMENDED ROUTE**

### **Location**

Starting from the junction of I-8 and I-10 and proceeding westward and northward, the recommended route for designation as the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region is: I-8, SR 85, I-10, the Sun Valley Parkway (extended north to US 60), US 60, the Wickenburg Bypass, and US 93. The exact alignments for the Sun Valley Parkway extension and the Wickenburg Bypass have not yet been determined. This option, listed as Option #1 in the Kimley-Horn & Associates report and shown in Figure 1, provides the following advantages:

- it is the lowest cost alternative that does not include Loop 303. Loop 303 has a significantly larger existing community that would be impacted than does the Sun Valley Parkway.
- it benefits safety. As a bypass route around the central metropolitan area, it helps to reduce the amount of commercial traffic that might otherwise move through the congested downtown area. It thereby helps to reduce the number of urban conflicts as well as the movement of hazardous materials within the urban area. The recommended upgrading of facilities to meet CANAMEX corridor design standards (see Table 1 below) should also benefit safety.
- it benefits air quality. As a bypass route, it helps to reduce emissions of particulate air pollution associated with commercial traffic moving through the congested downtown area. Particulate emissions from diesel-powered vehicles also contribute to the "brown cloud" effect that is a significant concern in the region. Also, it is expected to have only low to moderate expected environmental impacts within the existing right of way for the Sun Valley Parkway.
- it has no identified significant impacts to Title VI or environmental justice protected populations.
- it has the minimum peak period travel time and next to best level of service for through traffic among the eight alternatives assessed.
- it makes use of an existing truck route, namely SR 85, which already carries significant commercial traffic and is already programmed for substantial improvements as part of an upgrade to a four lane divided facility.
- it allows for the more efficient use of the existing transportation investment in the Sun Valley Parkway, which is considered underutilized to date.
- it provides a new choice for a route for commercial and other traffic around the central metropolitan area.

and

- it has among the most positive and least negative public and agency support of the alternatives considered.

The designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region as specified above should be incorporated into federal legislation as a component of the federally designated CANAMEX Corridor. This action would make the Maricopa region portion of the CANAMEX Corridor eligible for federal funding to be earmarked for high priority corridors in the national highway system.

## **Guidelines**

The guidelines listed below are intended to represent minimum design elements for the CANAMEX Corridor. These are in addition to any federal and state requirements.

**Table 1: Guidelines for the CANAMEX Corridor within Maricopa County**

<b>Design Element</b>	<b>Guideline</b>
No. of Lanes (Total both directions)	4 (divided)
Incident Management System, Travel Advisories	In place or planned, where warranted.
Truck Facility Design Criteria	Satisfies or will satisfy minimum federal and state criteria for truck facility design (including pavement and geometrics).
Access Control	Fully or partially controlled.

## **COSTS**

Satisfying the design guidelines for the CANAMEX Corridor will require improvements to existing routes in addition to new infrastructure. Costs for improvements to existing infrastructure are listed in Table 2. Additions to infrastructure for purposes of the CANAMEX Corridor include a bypass around the Town of Wickenburg and the extension of the Sun Valley Parkway north to connect to US 60. Costs for these additions are also listed in Table 2.

A bypass around Wickenburg is considered an essential element of the recommended route for the CANAMEX Corridor in order to minimize delays for commercial and other traffic along this section of the Corridor. Alternatives for a bypass are currently under consideration in a study being conducted by the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The alternatives under consideration for the Wickenburg bypass include both ultimate and interim configurations, with the former costing significantly more than the latter. For purposes of the designation of the CANAMEX Corridor, no specific recommendation is being made on the choice of the ultimate or interim configuration at this time.

The extension of the Sun Valley Parkway north to US 60 was explicitly included among the options considered for the CANAMEX Corridor. The recommended routing for the CANAMEX Corridor along the Sun Valley Parkway is not feasible without this new infrastructure. In addition to the costs for the extension, some additional costs may be incurred in the process of limiting access for the portion of the existing Parkway between I-10 and Bell Road. However, the goal would be to limit access through the development process.



Construction of the recommended projects would be phased in over time, with costs phased correspondingly. Additionally, to save costs, action to obtain right of way for the Sun Valley Parkway extension to US 60 may occur well in advance of construction. The planning cost estimates for all of the improvements to existing infrastructure and additions of new infrastructure ranges from approximately \$45 million, which would provide for a two lane extension of the Sun Valley Parkway and an interim bypass for Wickenburg, to approximately \$500 million (year 2000 dollars). The latter cost corresponds to construction of the ultimate concept for each segment of the corridor.

## **FUNDING**

### **Federal**

In total, \$58 million in federal funds has been received for CANAMEX Corridor - related projects in Arizona since the passage of TEA-21. Approximately \$47 million of that total was for work on the Hoover Dam Bypass project. A total of \$1.13 billion from various sources has been programmed for CANAMEX Corridor projects for the period 1990 to 2004, not including improvements or additions to infrastructure within the Maricopa region.

While federal funding assistance for CANAMEX Corridor projects appears limited currently relative to the costs that will be involved in developing the corridor, other federal sources of revenue may be available and increased funding may be made available in the longer term.

### **Programmed Funds**

Funding has been programmed for improvements to portions of the recommended CANAMEX Corridor within the Maricopa region, primarily for SR 85. The draft MAG 2001-2005 Transportation Improvement Program includes approximately \$53.8 million for improvements to SR 85 to take portions of it to a four-lane facility. Funds of \$1.5 million in 2005 have also been programmed for a design study for the Wickenburg Bypass.

## **DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

The draft recommendation made by this project was guided by input received from agency representatives, key stakeholders and the public. Input was received at a Stakeholder Forum held in November 1999 and via correspondence as noted previously. Input to be received in consultation on this draft recommendation will be considered before a final recommendation is made to the MAG Regional Council and State Transportation Board (STB) for their consideration and approval.

Federal law requires that all federally-funded and any regionally-significant recommended transportation infrastructure improvements within the Maricopa region be accepted by the MAG Regional Council for inclusion in the MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and associated Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) before the respective projects can be implemented. Inclusion in the LRTP requires a funding plan.

**Table 2: Approximate Costs for the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa Region**

Segment	Costs (millions)		Description
	<u>Low*</u>	<u>Ultimate</u>	
I-8	\$ 0.0	\$ 0.0	No improvements required for CANAMEX purposes (I-10 to SR 85 segment).
SR 85	0.0	257.8	Ultimate is upgrade to 4 lane freeway, with interchanges and frontage roads per June 2000 Design Concept Report (I-8 to I-10).
I-10	0.0	0.0	No improvements required for CANAMEX purposes (SR 85 to Sun Valley Parkway).
Sun Valley Parkway	25.0	40.0	New infrastructure to extend to US 60 (from Bell Road). Low is two lanes; ultimate is four lanes.
US 60	0.0	0.0	No additional improvements required for CANAMEX purposes.
Wickenburg Bypass	20.0	200.0	Interim v. Ultimate configuration
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 45</b>	<b>\$498</b>	

\* The cost estimate for the Sun Valley Parkway extension is based upon a two lane facility with sufficient width to accommodate truck traffic.

After MAG and STB approvals, the designation of the CANAMEX Corridor through the Maricopa region will be recommended for incorporation into legislation as a component of the federally designated CANAMEX Corridor. This action would make the Maricopa region portion of the CANAMEX Corridor eligible for federal funding to be earmarked for high priority corridors in the national highway system.